

THE UP LINE

NEWSLETTER OF CAMBRIDGE HEATH AND LONDON FIELDS RAIL USERS

DECEMBER 2020

More trains to fill the gaps

A new early morning Sunday train service starts on Sunday 13 December at Cambridge Heath and London Fields stations.

And six more trains have been provided at Cambridge Heath during the weekday peak to provide a much improved service.

The extra trains have corrected a problem from nine years ago when awkward gaps were created in the timetable.

One traveller from Edmonton Green said: "This is fantastic news. On Sunday, I will be taking the first train from Edmonton Green and will be able to get off at Cambridge Heath to enjoy the Columbia Road flower market for some Christmas shopping."

The area around Cambridge Heath has become the place to go on a Sunday, with crowds arriving from all over London.

The first train to Liverpool Street on Sundays is now an hour and a half earlier. From 13 December 2020, it leaves London Fields at 0802 and Cambridge Heath at 0804.

Going north, the first Sunday train is at 0735 from Cambridge Heath and 0737 from London Fields.

A basic Sunday service was reintroduced at our two stations 15 years ago.



HELLO: A new Bombardier class 710 train pictured leaving Cambridge Heath station on a murky 11 December 2020



GOODBYE: The old class 315 trains pictured here at Cambridge Heath in 2018, after nearly 40 years of service

Improvements needed

We asked Transport for London to consider installing train information screens at ground level at Cambridge Heath, as at London Fields, Hackney Downs, Stoke Newington and Rectory Road stations. TfL responded, the screens were installed and were welcomed by passengers.

We asked for the reinstatement of the six peak hour trains (five in the morning and one in the evening) at Cambridge Heath which were cut in December 2011 and led to a fall in passenger numbers. *TfL responded positively and the trains are back.*

We asked for an earlier start to the Sunday service, from 07.00, rather than 09.00. *TfL responded positively, although the earliest trains are around 0730.*

Changes needed at Cambridge Heath

Now we would like to see:

1. Ground floor retail unit to be let.
2. Station name and logo on Hackney Road bridge as at Hackney Central.
3. Second entrance on Hackney Road, to augment the existing entrance on Cambridge Heath Road.

Changes needed at both Cambridge Heath and London Fields stations

1. Lifts at both stations to help mobility-impaired passengers, including parents with buggies and small children as well as passengers with cycles and luggage.
2. Additional platform shelters and seats to cope with rising passenger numbers.
3. Improved timetable to provide a train every 10 minutes rather than every 15 minutes as at present.
4. Stopping some Chingford trains at Cambridge Heath and London Fields to provide a direct service to Clapton and Walthamstow, without the need to change trains at Hackney Downs.
5. Designate Cambridge Heath and London Fields as art stations, to reflect the artistic

community in the area and brighten up the stations.

6. Encourage artists to use the stations to display their art.

These changes are suggested by Cambridge Heath and London Fields Rail Users for the attention of Gareth Powell, managing director for surface transport, and Jon Fox, director of London Rail. They will also be circulated to local politicians who have shown an interest in train services.

We are unhappy that the “official” estimates from the Office of Rail and Road seriously understate the real number of passengers who use our two stations, when compared with our carefully recorded observations over 23 years.

We believe the ORR 2019/20 estimates of 1,332,312 passengers using London Fields annually and 774,306 for Cambridge Heath are significantly below the actual numbers. This undermines the case for improving our stations and the train services.

TfL figures for 2018/19 appear to show that ORR “lost” 700,000 passengers at London Fields and 300,000 passengers at Cambridge Heath. Based on TfL figures and our counts, we believe there were more than 2 million passengers using London Fields and 1 million at Cambridge Heath.

Improvements since the CHLFUG campaign began:

Daytime off-peak, evening, Saturday and Sunday trains. Oyster card readers, and more reliable ticket machines with Oyster top-up facilities. Real-time information screens at street level as well as customer information screens and Help points on all platforms. Live monitoring of CCTV at London Fields and Cambridge Heath. Platform seats. More timetables and printed information. Re-painting. Improved lighting. Efficient graffiti removal. New signs. Cambridge Heath needle bin removed. Stair edge repairs. Litter collection and efficient cleaning. Additional entrance at London Fields. Refurbishment of Cambridge Heath station. Public address system. Station staff while trains are running